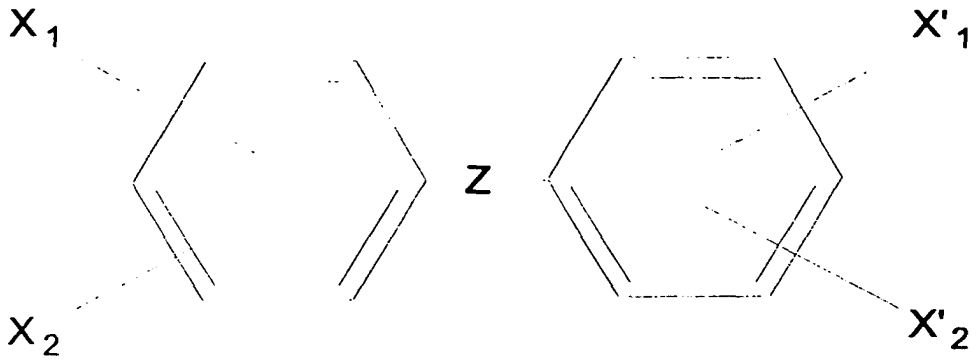
We claim:

1. A method of treating a disorder or disease characterized by T cell activation, comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of a compound having the formula:



wherein: X_2 = GhyCH-, $GhyCCH_3$- or H-; X_1, X'_1 and X'_2, independently = GhyCH- or $GhyCCH_3$-; Z = -NH(CO)NH-, $-(C_6H_4)-$, $-(C_5NH_3)-$ or -A-$(CH_2)_n$-A-, n = 2-10, which is unsubstituted, mono- or di-C-methyl substituted, or a mono- or di- unsaturated derivative thereof; and A = independently -NH(CO)-, -(CO)NH-, -NH(CO)NH-, -NH- or -O- and salts thereof.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein, when X_2 is GhyCH- or $GhyCCH_3$-, X_2 is meta or para to X_1 and X'_2 is meta or para to X'_1.

3. The method of claim 2 which is N,N'-bis(3,5-diacetylphenyl)decanediamide tetrakis(amidinohydrazone) tetrahydrochloride.

4. The method of claim 1wherein the disorder is HIV-infection.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the disease is an autoimmune disease.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the disease is caused by a viral infection.

7. The method of Claim 5 wherein the disease is an autoimmune disease selected from the group consisting of systemic lupus erythematosus, insulin-dependent diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroiditis, psoriasis, graft versus host disease, graft rejection, and multiple sclerosis.

8. A method of treating a disorder or disease characterized by T cell activation, comprising administering to a subject an effective amount of an agent capable of inhibiting gene expression of a component of the p38 MAPK signaling pathway.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the agent is an antisense molecule complementary to p38 MAPK.